



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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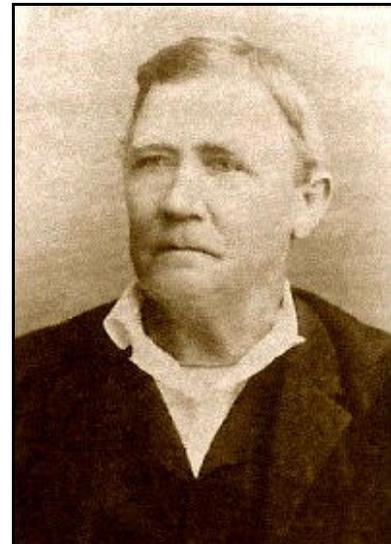
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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Isaac Duke Parker

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Isaac Duke Parker was a member of the Parker family who have figured so much in Texas history. He was born in Crawford County, Illinois on October 23, 1821. He was a Confederate veteran, a member of the Texas legislature, and a farmer for many years near Birdville. Several members of his family were Tarrant County pioneers. He is often confused with his father, Isaac Parker, Sr., and his first cousin who lived near Grapevine, Isaac Green Parker.



Isaac D. Parker's parents were Isaac Parker (1793-1883) and Lucy (Cheatham) Parker (1794-1867). They were married in Robertson County, Tennessee, and shortly afterward to Crawford County, Illinois, where the elder Isaac served as sheriff and justice of the peace. Later he moved the family to Cole County, Missouri, where he served as county treasurer for a time. In 1833 he moved the family to Texas. He served in the Texas Revolution and in many elected offices in both the Republic of Texas and the State of Texas.

The elder Isaac Parker's father, and two of his (Isaac's Sr.'s) brothers were among those killed by Indians on May 19, 1836 at the Parker's Fort Massacre two miles west of present-day Groesbeck in Limestone County, Texas. Among the children taken captive that day was nine-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker, Isaac Duke Parker's first cousin. Cynthia later married a Comanche, gave birth to Quanah Parker (the last Comanche war chief) and died in Texas after being forcibly reunited with her white family.

Isaac Duke Parker doubtless got to know Cynthia Ann Parker, since she spent the first two years after he recapture by the whites at the home of Isaac Parker, Sr., in Birdville. Isaac Duke Parker was one

of Cynthia's two legal guardians, appointed by the court. Some time after 1867 Isaac Parker, Sr., left Birdville and moved to Parker County, where he died in 1883. Parker County was named in his honor when the legislature formed it in December, 1855.

Research done in connection with the historic Parker double-log cabin at Log Cabin Village in Fort Worth indicates that the elder Isaac Parker and his second wife left Tarrant County in 1872 and turned the house over to Isaac Duke Parker and his family. Some excerpts from the house's history, found at Log Cabin Village's website, are as follows: *"This double-pen log house is the oldest structure in Tarrant County. It was built in 1848 on the land originally owned by Hamilton Bennett, who sold it to Isaac Parker in 1853. Aside from its age, the Parker Cabin holds a fascinating history and is an excellent example of a dog trot cabin. The dog-trot is the covered breezeway that separates the two log rooms. This ingenious design allowed the breeze to flow through the dog trot in the summer. Since the kitchen was separate from the bedroom, the kitchen fires did not reach the bedroom; thus keeping at least one room at a comfortable temperature. In addition, each log room has its own stone fireplace which provided warmth in the winter. In 1872 Isaac Parker and his second wife, Virginia Simms, left this home in the care of his son, Isaac Duke Parker, and moved to Parker County which had been named in his honor...."*

"...As was the fate of many log houses, the original structure was eventually surrounded by more rooms constructed of milled lumber as saw mills became available in Texas. In 1920, Amon G. Carter acquired the Birdville home and restored the log portion at Shady Oaks Farm where it was used to display a small part of Mr. Carter's vast collection of Americana. After Mr. Carter's death, the Amon G. Carter Foundation donated the historic structure to the Pioneer Texas Heritage Committee for restoration at the Log Cabin Village, where it is interpreted as the two-room log house, with a kitchen and a bedroom, of the affluent Parker Family."

Isaac Duke Parker represented Tarrant County in the Texas legislature in 1855 and 1856, and succeeded in having a special election ordered to decide the county seat issue between the then-seat, Birdville, and the nearby growing town of Fort Worth. He also served as a county commissioner in 1862-1864.

An excellent biographical sketch, complete with a woodcut of Mr. Parker, doubtless from material Parker himself supplied, appeared in Personnel of the Texas State Government, with Sketches of Distinguished Texans..., compiled and published by L. E. Daniell at Austin, Texas in 1889, and printed by Smith, Hicks, and Jones, State Printers: *"The Twenty-first session of the Texas House of Representatives would have been as if the performance of Hamlet were attempted with the Prince of Denmark left out of the cast, without the presence of I. D. Parker of Tarrant. Rugged, earnest, and impassioned, Mr. Parker always caught the ear and plaudits of the members when he obtained the floor. Upon the recognition of the "gentleman from Tarrant" by the Speaker, the members crowded about his desk to enjoy the sledge hammer blows and the dry humor that ran through his speeches.*

"I. D. Parker, son of Isaac and Lucy W. Parker, of English lineage, was born in Crawford county, Illinois on the twenty-third of October, 1821, and was educated by having the sharp edges of experience knocked off in a contest with the world. With keen perceptions he acquired a fund of information more useful than could be obtained from textbooks or college curriculum, and that built

up on the foundation of good common sense and good judgment gave him a sufficient store of knowledge to be a formidable opponent in the transactions of life and in public debate, as he pithily expresses it, "I was educated everywhere."

"He came to Texas with his parents in 1833. The family engaged in farming, settling first in Grimes county; then in Houston county and then in Tarrant county.

"When Mr. Parker became of age he first opened a farm in St. Marks county, then in Houston county, where he lived two years, and then in Anderson where he lived six years, and then he settled in Tarrant county and is still living there engaged in farming. He has been moderately successful, and again as he expresses it, "I live at home when I am there."

"He has served as justice of the peace in Houston county and county commissioner in Tarrant county.

"He was nominated by a Democratic convention of his county for the House of Representatives and was elected November 6, 1888, by a majority of eight hundred and fifty-nine votes.

"He served on a number of committees, and was particularly watchful of the course of legislation, attacking measures he thought wrong with rugged eloquence, and supporting whatever he approved with strong argument and inimitable wit.

"Mr. Parker has been married twice, first to Miss Huntsman of Madison county, Tennessee, who died in 1863. He then married in 1865, Miss Mary P. Holt, of Tarrant County. He is a member of the "Old Hard Shell" Baptist church, and is an odd fellow of his own organization. He says he "never belonged to any institution that had to do business with shut doors."

I. D. Parker was a member of the Robert E. Lee Camp of United Confederate Veterans at Fort Worth. He told them he enlisted in the Gano Guards at Dallas in 1864.

The Parker home is shown on the Sam Street Map of Tarrant County, made in 1895. In modern-day terms, the house appears to have been about where the modern-day roadbed of East Loop 820 runs, about halfway between the bridge where Trinity Boulevard crosses over Loop 820 and where the Loop crosses over the railroad north of Trinity Boulevard. This is within the far-eastern limits of Fort Worth, and is only a very short distance southwest of the I. D. Parker Cemetery.

Isaac Duke Parker died at his home on October 29, 1902. An obituary for Mr. Parker appeared in the Arlington Weekly Journal on Friday, October 31, 1902: *"I.D. Parker an old time citizen and once the representative of this county in the legislature, died at Birdville Tuesday. He was 78 years old and one of the county's useful citizens. In his death the whole county sustains a great loss."* No obituary has been found for Mr. Parker in any of the surviving Fort Worth newspapers from that period.

Parker lies buried with his mother, his wife and many of his children in the I. D. Parker family cemetery, located in the 1300 block of Cardinal Drive in Hurst, Texas. State Highway 10 makes up

the south line of the cemetery property. A Texas Historical Marker at the site has the following inscription: *“I. D. Parker Public Cemetery and Homestead. Isaac Duke Parker (1821-1902), son of early Texas politician Isaac Parker (1793-1883), settled near this site in 1853 with his family. During the Civil War I. D. Parker served as Tarrant County Commissioner before enlisting in the Confederate army. He assumed ownership and operation of the Parker Homestead and Cemetery about 1867. Shortly before his death, Parker donated this Cemetery property and designated the eastern half, which contains more than 30 graves, as a public burial ground. The cemetery and homesite symbolize the life of this prominent pioneer family.”*

Both Mr. Parker’s wives lie buried in the family cemetery. The first, Sarah L. Parker, was born in Madison County, Tennessee on April 29, 1827 and died December 30, 1863. Her headstone says she was the daughter of Lemuel Huntsman, married Parker on December 28, 1845, and came to Texas in 1846. The second Mrs. I. D. Parker, Mary Holt Parker, was born March 20, 1848 and died December 4, 1908.

I. D. Parker’s children buried in the cemetery include Sam H. Parker (1848-1888); Charles Parker (1851-1875); Ann Obedience Parker (Apr. 24, 1854 in Anderson County-June 10, 1864); Isaac Huntsman Parker (Nov. 2_, 1856-March 16, 1860); James Parker (1859-1877); Lemuel Parker (Feb. 21, 1862-Aug. 1, 1867); Lucie Eller Parker (Aug. 30, 1867-April 22, 1869); Jodie Parker Thomas (Sept. 30, 1869-May 5, 1953); Robert Lee Parker (Sept. 30, 1871-June 15, 1942); Tobe Parker (1874-1874); Hesly Parker (1875-1876); and Duke Parker (Jan. 7, 1877-Sept. 24, 1955). Thus I. D. Parker outlived most of his children.

